Gc
929.2
R7227R

ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 1833 01423 3644
REYNOLDS HISTORICAL
GENEALOGY COLLECTION

Gc
929.2
R7227R

2272958

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2019

https://archive.org/details/parentsofjameshe00rose

"Ro"

THE PARENTS OF JAMES HENRY ROSENBERGER (1821-1867)

By Francis Coleman Rosenberger

Prepared in 19:

GENEALOGY COLLECTION
PUBLIC LIBRARY
FORT WAYNE & ALLEN CO., IND.

Allen County Public Library
Ft. Wayne, Indiana

THE PARENTS OF JAMES HENRY ROSENBERGER (1821-1867)

By Francis Coleman Rosenberger

Prepared in 1958.

Editor's Note: Mr. Francis Coleman Rosenberger, Virginia lawyer and writer, of 509 Fontaine Street, Alexandria, Virginia, past President of the National Genealogical Society, has prepared the following comments on the evidence available in regard to the identity of the parents of James Henry Rosenberger (1821-1867). Mr. Rosenberger's published genealogical work includes Some Notes on the Rosenberger Family in Pennsylvania and Virginia, 1729-1950 (privately printed, 1950), Word from the West: A Letter to Rudolph Rosenberger in Virginia from his Son in Indiana, 1835 (privately printed, 1951), "Erasmus Rosenberger of Shenandoah County and His German Origins" in The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, January 1955, and "German Church Records of the Shenandoah Valley as a Genealogical Source" in The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, April 1958. He also assisted in assembling materials for The Rosenberger Family: An Addition to the Baker Genealogy by Robert Helsley Baker (mimeographed, Strasburg, Virginia, 1956).

2272958

In October 1953, in the course of a wide genealogical correspondence, I received a letter from Mrs. William E. Berry (Ethel Clare Rosenberger Berry, born 1882), of Richmond, Indiana, a daughter of the late President of Whittier College, Absalom Rosenberger (1849-1934), and a granddaughter of James Henry Rosenberger (1821-1867). Mrs. Berry wrote:

"I have very scanty knowledge of my Virginia Rosenberger forebears. My grandfather James Henry Rosenberger left Virginia at the age of thirteen or about the year 1834 and settled in the vicinity of Thorntown, Indiana, at that time a wilderness of woods. Here he married and here my father Absalom Rosenberger and his numerous brothers and sisters were born. I think James Henry's father's name was Joseph."

Correspondence with Mrs. Homer G. Rosenberger, Jr., of Whittier, California, noted that records of the family identified the father of James Henry Rosenberger (1821-1867) as "Joseph Rosenberger who lived in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia."

From that time I have been alert for information in regard to this Joseph Rosenberger and his family.

The 1820 census of Shenandoah County, Virginia, lists one Joseph Rosenberger as the head of a family. The family group is shown as follows:

Joseph Rosenberger
- 1 male between 26 and 45 years of age (i. e., Joseph)
- 2 males under 10
- 1 male between 10 and 16
- 1 female between 26 and 45
- 1 female under 10
- 1 female between 16 and 26

In the same year, 1820, a Shenandoah County marriage bond is recorded for the marriage of Elizabeth Rosenberger and Daniel Sigler and it notes that the bride is the daughter of Joseph.

The 1830 census of Shenandoah County, Virginia, lists this family group:

Joseph Rosenberger
1 male between 40 and 50 (i. e., Joseph)
1 male between 5 and 10
1 female between 40 and 50

It is not unreasonable that in the decade between the 1820 census and the 1830 census, children of Joseph Rosenberger other than his daughter Elizabeth had married and established homes of their own, leaving only "1 male between 5 and 10" as the lone child at home in the family group of which Joseph was the head.

If this Joseph was the father of James Henry Rosenberger who "left Virginia at the age of thirteen or about the year 1834 and settled in the vicinity of Thorntown, Indiana," and the "1 male between 5 and 10" in the 1830 census is that James Henry, then we would expect to find this family group of three to disappear from the records of Shenandoah County, Virginia, and to reappear in the records of Indiana "in the vicinity of Thorntown".

This is exactly what we do find.

Joseph Rosenberger does not appear in the 1840 census of Shenandoah County, Virginia.

Joseph Rosenberger does appear in the 1840 census of Madison County, Indiana. The census-taker may not have been perfect in the spelling of surnames, but Joseph is there. On page 180 of the 1840 census of Madison County, Indiana, there is listed this family group:

Joseph Roddenbarger
1 male 60 to 70
1 female 50 to 60
1 male 15 to 20

It has been noted by Mr. William B. Lindley that the parents of Elizabeth Mills, the future wife of James Henry Rosenberger (1821-1867), had moved to Madison County, Indiana, in 1833.

A number of transactions in land by Joseph Rosenberger and his wife Mary are recorded in Shenandoah County, Virginia, in the first quarter of the 1800's. We would hope to find a deed in Madison County, Indiana, for the purchase of land there by Joseph Rosenberger and his wife Mary in the 1830's. Unhappily, the Clerk of the Madison Circuit Court has advised me that "the Court House was destroyed by fire in 1880 so all our records previous to that time were destroyed by fire." The 1840 Madison County census record must suffice to place Joseph Rosenberger in the County.

Joseph Rosenberger, who was listed as between 60 and 70 in the 1840 census, does not appear in the 1850 census. In that year, however, James Henry Rosenberger appears in his own right as the head of a family in neighboring Boone County, Indiana:

	age	born
James H. Rosenberger	29	Va.
Elizabeth	29	N.C.
Joseph S.	7	Ind.
Deborah	6	"
Mary E.	4	"
Jeremiah	2	"
Absalom	4/12	"

I find it very persuasive that the father of James Henry Rosenberger, the Joseph Rosenberger "who lived in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia," was the

Joseph Rosenberger (born about 1780 according to the census records) whom we find in the records of Shenandoah County, Virginia.

There is only one Joseph Rosenberger in the records of Shenandoah County of the period. I have found none in the records of the neighboring Shenandoah Valley counties.

Other facts strengthen this identification. It has been noted above that an 1820 Shenandoah County, Virginia, marriage bond is recorded for the marriage of Elizabeth Rosenberger, daughter of Joseph Rosenberger, to Daniel Sigler. James Henry Rosenberger in Indiana named his eldest son Joseph Sigler Rosenberger (1842-1905).

Only one consideration has been urged against this identification of Joseph Rosenberger of Shenandoah County, Virginia, as the father of James Henry Rosenberger. This involves the maiden name of his wife Mary.

The records of Shenandoah County, Virginia, show clearly that Joseph Rosenberger was married to Mary Grady, daughter of William Grady, in 1805. The Shenandoah County marriage bond records show a bond, dated February 27, 1805, for Joseph Rosenberger and Mary Grady, daughter of William. The marriage register carries an entry by Anderson Moffett that "I hereby Certify that Joseph Rosenberger and Mary Grady are lawfully married by License given under my hand this 3rd day of March, 1805." There is even of record a consent note from William Grady setting forth that "I Do agree to Let Joseph Rosenberger Have My Daughter as I am willing for her to get Married."

It has been urged that the wife of Joseph Rosenberger, father of James Henry Rosenberger, was not Mary Grady but was Mary "McElwee," and that accordingly the Joseph Rosenberger of Shenandoah County, who married Mary Grady, could not be the father of James Henry Rosenberger.

Some little time and effort have been spent by genealogically-minded descendants of James Henry Rosenberger in an endeavor to find some public record or early family record of Mary "McElwee." So far as I know this effort has been entirely without success. Even the discovery of Mary "McElwee," however, would not necessarily invalidate or be inconsistent with the identification of Joseph Rosenberger of Shenandoah County, Virginia, as the father of James Henry Rosenberger, inasmuch as Joseph Rosenberger of Shenandoah County, who married Mary Grady in 1805, could, of course, have been twice married.

It would appear to be of value to examine carefully the basis for the belief that the mother of James Henry Rosenberger was Mary "McElwee."

The oldest records in the possession of the family, consisting of loose pages of Bible records, give the date of the birth of James Henry Rosenberger but do not give the names of his parents.

The name "McElwee" appears in a small note book of family records. These records are captioned "Rosenberger tree beginning with Absalom Rosenberger's Grandparents Joseph and Mary McElwee Rosenberger who lived in the Shenandoah Valley, Virginia." The first entry is: "Joseph Rosenberger m. Mary McElwee. She lived to the age of 110 yrs."

It may be noted that if in fact the mother of James Henry Rosenberger "lived to the age of 110 yrs." she would, even if she were 45 at the time of James Henry's birth, have been living as late as 1885.

It is clear from this note book itself, which lists dates of births and marriages and deaths, without a change in the ink or handwriting, as late as the 1920's and early 1930's, that the note book record must necessarily have been written as recently as the early 1930's.

I am informed that the note book record was prepared by Florabel Patterson Rosenberger (1863-1934), the second wife of Absalom Rosenberger (1849-1934), whom he married in 1910.

It seems hardly probable that Absalom Rosenberger's second wife would have any personal knowledge of Absalom's grandmother's maiden name.

Mrs. William E. Berry, daughter of Absalom Rosenberger, commented in a letter of January 10, 1958, to Mrs. Homer G. Rosenberger, Jr.:

"No doubt you know that the handwriting in the little book is Grandma Belle's. I do not know where the information came from. I suspect that it is partly Grandfather's memory particularly of the earlier generation. If this is the case it is possible that he was incorrect about the name McElwee. With regard to the time when the book was compiled the latest recording in her - Grandma Belle's - penmanship is the death of my sister Lucille in 1931. I think that dates the book approximately."

Absalom Rosenberger himself, in reminiscences of his early life, which he left in manuscript, does not mention his paternal grandparents.

If Joseph Rosenberger died before the 1850 census, his grandson Absalom Rosenberger, born in 1849 (not to be confused with his uncle, Absalom Rosenberger, son of Joseph), could scarcely have had any personal recollection of him. If, however, Joseph's wife in fact "lived to the age of 110 yrs." some mention of her might reasonably be expected.

Absalom Rosenberger's reminiscences comment interestingly on other members of the family and scenes of a hundred years ago. I quote here brief excerpts from a 22-page, single-spaced typed manuscript which I had the pleasure of examining, through the courtesy of Mrs. Homer G. Rosenberger, Jr., in March 1958:

"I was born in a log-cabin, situated on the banks of Wolf Creek, three and one half miles to the south-west of Thorntown, Indiana, 'in the year of our Lord December 26, 1849', at two o'clock in the morning . . .

"My memory is somewhat indistinct about these early years and especially so of the various places where we had our home for we dwelt in various places until we had a farm home of our own. . .

"Certain incidents are firmly fixed in my memory connected with our tenure at the Lancaster farm. . . It was while living here that Uncle George Rosenberger, from Virginia, came to visit us, bringing his family in what was called a 'carry all', a vehicle well named as he brought all his belonging with them in it.

"When I was four years old my father entered into membership with the Friends, taking the boys of the family along with him. At that time the daughters were Friends for mother was a birth-right member and the daughters thereby were accepted as birth-right members but the boys were excluded since the father was a non-member. He immediately set about becoming a consistent Friend by strict conformity to their demands for 'plainess of dress and address.' A life of self-sacrifice began with me immediately for my father proceeded promptly to clip from the top of my little cap an ornamental button which to my childish eyes was a thing of beauty and a joy forever. To the day of his death my father deported himself in perfect accord with the customs and traditions of the old fashioned Friends for he was a Friend by convincement and loyal to the last.

"My memory runs back to a time in our neighborhood when nothing but log-cabins dotted the landscape and not a carpet of any description covered a floor in any of them. Tongue-and-groove lumber was unknown so that cracks were opened between the boards of the floors for the admission of fresh air making it unnecessary to give instruction on proper ventillation.

"Well do I remember a trip that our family made to see relatives in Madison County, Indiana. My grandmother Mills and most of her sons and daughters lived in the Pipe Creek neighborhood and our household decided it was time to make them a visit. . .

"Our relatives were not numerous in Boone County. Uncle William Mills lived three miles on a bee-line, consisting of himself and Aunt Tabitha and their children, viz: - Rachel, Martha, Rhoda, Elizabeth, Milton Henry, Nathan Elliott Ellwood and Albert who died in childhood. Uncle James Brown and Aunt Ruth lived three miles to the north-east and our road thither was along an Indian trail mostly through great forests of beautiful trees. The children were: - John, William, Mary Elizabeth, Cynthia, Harvey and Ira who died when a small boy. Uncle George and Aunt Mary Rosenberger lived a half mile to the east across the fields and through the woods and their children were: - Sarah, Amanda, Susan, Reuben, and Peter and Oliver. Uncle George and family within a few years moved to Milford eastern Illinois and we saw little of them after their move thither.

"The first time I ever went beyond the boundaries of Boone County after that early trip to Pipe Creek was when about thirteen years old. The four boys of our family accompanied by Abel Barker, a neighbor, and Solomon Johnson, whose home was in Illinois, went in our road wagon to visit the families of Uncle George Rosenberger and our Uncle Christopher and Aunt Mary Decker. It required two days in which to reach our destination."

In conclusion, there is much evidence to suggest that Joseph Rosenberger of Shenandoah County, Virginia, who married Mary Grady in 1805, was the father of James Henry Rosenberger. It is possible that Joseph Rosenberger was twice married, but I believe that it is also quite possible that the name Mary "McElwee" in the note book compiled in the early 1930's is simply an error, and that James Henry Rosenberger (1821-1867) was the son of Joseph Rosenberger (born about 1780) and his wife Mary Grady, daughter of William Grady.

It is to be hoped that the identification may be firmly proved or disproved by public or family records still to come to light.

HECKMAN
BINDERY INC.
MAY 85
N. MANCHESTER,
INDIANA 46962